

# Chapter 5

## Leadership / Followership Interface and the Workplace of the Future: Who Leads?

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Relationships have been documented to be the hub of employee social activities in the workplace. With the disruptions of Industry 4.0, much value and attention is given to machines and technology. Concepts of leadership and followership held by organizations may no longer hold water to determine the place of man and machines as relational tools in the workplace and to highlight the promotion of values in the man-human interface in the 4IR. The centrality of this chapter will be to determine whether the leadership and followership theories are relevant to organizations in the face of 4IR. In the 4IR, practitioner's attention should be on human development to lead despite technological advancements and the development of artificial intelligence.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The global workforce is transforming the way organizations lead, manage and work, in the same tone changes have occurred in the way individuals follow. The leader in a relational context and for the purpose of the workplace is that employee who is the head of a group of people by virtue of having great strength and wisdom or may have inherited a position of power even if strength and wisdom were not part of the person's virtues (Northouse, 2017). Leadership can be viewed from an individual's person-

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ality traits, behaviour type, autocracy, participation, situational, transactional or resource negotiation and transformational points. Leadership has been structured around situations, non-hierarchical and relational axioms (Western, 2019). The interest of this chapter is on the relational aspect of leadership. Followership has been viewed from the role perspective that individuals can have socially or between groups of people. Leaders and followers establish a relationship where their interests are mutually served. Previous study documented that it takes the leader and follower to co-create relationships (Abe, 2015). Commonality between the Followers in a relationship with their leaders is the constant desire to belong to a larger community and the expectation that the leader is honest or trustworthy. The outcome of the leader-follower relationship at work is effective organizational performance (Bashore, 2017).

The intervention of the fourth industrial revolution has changed the concept of leader-member exchange, not to only refer to the relationships between superior employee and his/her subordinates, but by widening the scope of interaction to extend to machines. The digital machines now perform the same tasks with human; and this has now become a resource to reckon with in workplace relationships. The association is now called the human-machine collaboration which is expected to shape the workplace of the future (Doppner, Derckx, & Schoder, 2019). Attempt is made to substitute the relationship between leader and followers with the human-machine relationship. The question this interface has posed is, who bears the responsibility of leadership, since both the man and the machines perform and complete tasks separately and simultaneously? The association that offers tremendous benefits has presented significant challenges also in the workplace of the future. The key features of the future workplace will be discussed. Prospects needed by employees in the adoption of technologies and skills re-allocation will be discussed to maximise the benefits of the relationship (Ibrahim, 2016).

## **BACKGROUND**

The capacity development and the continued smartness of the machines has manifested a new form of partnership between humans and machines. The partnership is the augmentation of human expertise and the artificial intelligence to find and develop talent. Platforms are developed that align with the thinking of human to meet their needs social (Shuen, 2018). Alexa talks to you, Google finds answers to your quests, Amazon knows your preferences, Facebook knows your friends and can help you find one if need be. The world has accepted the digital smartness of Artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, natural language processing, automation, and robots. The digital smartness is projected to affect the workplace and the global economy. It will add \$15.7 trillion to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2030. Increase productivity, wages, and require new skills by 65%. 10% of job [positions are unknown today. If this partnership can have economic and professional impact, what does the future hold for workplaces? Six distinct areas have been of interest to the global economic players, these are productivity and growth, natural resources, labour markets, global financial markets, economic impact of technology and innovation, and urbanization. The interest of this chapter is the automation of employment (Lent, 2018).

Automation is not a new phenomenon, and fears about its transformation of the workplace and effects on employment date back centuries, even before the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. The US president in the 1960s Lyndon Johnson was of the view that "technology destroys jobs, but not work". \* Fast forward and rapid recent advances in automation technologies, including artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, and robotics are now raising the fears anew—and with new urgency (Cook, 2019). In 2017, a report on automation, employment, and productivity documented the

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